



# Trumpet's Sound

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**Praise and prayer points**

**PRAISE**

- Thank the Lord for all the blessings He has showered on us in 2022

**PRAY FOR**

- the salvation of the many who come to hear the Word
- our 11 co-workers and their families that the Lord will use them for His glory
- the many children and the many villages that we visit to reach them with the gospel
- the many sick in our care who need medication and much needed operations
- sponsors for the increased number of families under financial stress in Lebanon and Armenia

*The costs of the publication are covered by the gifts of believers, who donate out of the generosity of their hearts.*

## ***It's Christmas Time***

**S**ome people think of Christmas as a time that brings toys, holidays, parties, and presents. But what does Christmas really bring? We read in Isaiah 9:6, *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

**A Saviour is born:** God, taking the form of a babe, was born in Bethlehem. A Saviour was born bringing salvation to all mankind. We read in the Bible of His miracles, His teachings – this Saviour is the same yesterday, today and forever. Many came to Him in repentance and experienced new life in Christ.

**Prince of Peace:** Just look around you today. The world is in a mess. All we see and hear about is greed, hate, and war. Nothing much has changed from Jesus' time. He came to bring peace in our hearts. He is the prince of peace. Unless you invite Him into your heart you will never experience the peace that Jesus can bring in your life, your heart, and your family.

**A wonderful Counsellor:** a name given by prophet Isaiah. Jesus is our counsellor. He is the only one who cares, who understands, who helps us when we are in need. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Jesus gives rest to the troubled heart.

**Everlasting Father:** Jesus was from the beginning, from before the time of creation. He is the one who guides us, protects us, and shepherds us. One day, when we reach heaven, this same Jesus will be our everlasting Father. Yes, we will all fall on our knees and worship him, praising His holy name,

Will you invite Jesus into your heart this Christmas?

HK



## ***Second-Generation or Second-Hand***

Recently, glancing through the public notices column of our local newspaper, I was once again reminded of the large range of support groups there is in our community. Nearly every kind of problem or trauma from alcoholism to being over-weight, seems to have a specialist support group where sufferers can receive valuable help and encouragement from others as they face their difficulties. At the risk of sounding facetious, and I don't mean to be, there have been times when I have wondered whether there would be value in a support group, to help those suffering from problems associated with being a second-generation Christian. Please don't misunderstand me. As a second-generation Christian myself, I am the first to recognise the great advantages of being brought up in a Christian home. Yet there are many believers brought up in Christian families, who seem to drift through life without the sense of rich vitality and inner spiritual fire that one comes to associate with those who know God deeply and personally. Their lives could not be described as an ongoing, dynamic, pilgrimage of discovery like Abraham's, but perhaps more like a subway commuter. He knows he is on the right train, but is so familiar with the route that he is faintly bored with it all.

Let us imagine there was a support group to help second-generation Christians. What precisely would be the problem that needed to be addressed? Let me suggest that one key issue is summed in the word authenticity. This means what you have, is truly yours. What you know arises from personal discovery. This is what John was speaking of when he said, "That which we have heard, which we have seen... we proclaim" (1 John 1:1). He was authentic. He was not passing on a second-hand idea but a throbbing reality he had found personally. Second-generation Christians can be robbed of authenticity when pre-packaged sets of beliefs and behaviours are imposed on them in ways that do not allow space for personal discovery and growth.

This issue of authenticity is played out wonderfully in the story of David and Goliath. Before David went out to fight the giant, Saul

gave David his own armour (1 Samuel 17:38-40). David tried to wear the heavy equipment and found it totally unsuited to him. He recognised the need for authenticity and declined the offer. The armour did not belong to him but to Saul. The five smooth stones and the sling were his. He had practised for many long hours while caring for his father's sheep and had made this weapon truly his own.

The common tragedy of many second-generation Christians is that they have unquestioningly put on the armour handed down to them from a previous generation. They do not assess whether it is too heavy for them or whether they can even fight the Lord's battle with it today. They have not realised that they can only be effective servants of God when their equipment, their faith and their convictions are truly their own. They can wearily arrive in mid-life still encumbered with the same inappropriate gear. It is heavy. It does not fit. It hinders their effectiveness because it is not theirs. They are not authentic and they sense a lack of conviction and authority in the deepest part of their soul. They are wearing what really belongs to someone else and they have never discovered before God what is truly theirs. It took courage for David to decline the armour and use what he had discovered to be truly his.

Having a faith that is authentically your own is vital when it comes to sharing the gospel with others. There is a simple and unavoidable principle: you can only share what is yours. What belongs to others is not yours to share. When this principle is transgressed, witnessing becomes listless, or it turns into a kind of religious commercial forced into the conversation more through a sense of guilt than joyful sharing. This happens when we try to share what we have not made truly ours. David's flying stone was alive to God's power and struck home because it was truly his and he refused to use anyone else's weapon.

He was authentic and God used him. Second-generation Christians can have the same sense of God's present vitality in their lives when they recognise the danger of hand-me-down equipment and find the courage to face their own authentic love-relationship with God.

Rex Dearlove



## **God against Egypt's gods (Part 2)**

### **Read Exodus 7-12**

In our last issue we started to think about the way God demonstrated His superiority to Pharaoh. He is greater than Egypt's gods, including their most important ones. We continue the story of the conflict between God and Pharaoh to see God's unquestioned superiority.

#### **3. Gnats**

The third plague was one in which Aaron struck the dust of the land and it became gnats throughout all the land of Egypt. This was a plague which was directed against the purity system of the priests. None of them could dare approach an altar with an insect on them. This plague made it impossible for them to conduct their worship program.

This time the magicians could not imitate the plague Aaron brought on the country. They could not create life and were forced to admit that this was "the finger of God". But in spite of being told by his magicians that this was the finger of God, Pharaoh would not believe.

#### **4. Swarms of flies**

Once again God warned Pharaoh what would happen if he did not obey the Lord. Flies would be in everything! These swarms of flies were to show that Beelzebub, another of their gods, was powerless to protect the Egyptians from a plague of flies.

But there was another feature about the plagues falling on Egypt. God declared that the region where the Israelites were would not be affected by the flies. This showed how much greater God was than the Egyptian gods. Not only could He initiate the plagues, but He could determine in which areas they would be effective.

At this stage it appeared as if Pharaoh would relent. Obviously the presence of flies had some effect on him, but it was only temporary. As soon as the flies were removed Pharaoh hardened his heart once

more. However, another of the gods of Egypt had been defeated. God was demonstrating that He was more powerful than the gods the Egyptians worshipped.

## **5. Death of livestock**

The fifth plague, the death of the livestock, was a very severe pestilence directed against the whole system of animal worship. The Lord set the time when the disease would strike – the next day. And it happened as Moses had warned Pharaoh it would.

Once again the Lord stated that there would be a difference between His people and the Egyptians. This time Pharaoh sent people to check if this were so. Hadn't he learned that the Lord was able to do all that He said He would do? No. He hadn't. Once again Pharaoh hardened his heart.

## **6. Boils**

For the sixth plague Moses took handfuls of ashes from the furnace, probably the ashes of their ritual sacrifices and threw them into the air. The ashes became a plague of boils breaking out on men and animals.

Egyptian priests were so obsessed with purity that they shaved themselves completely every three days. To be afflicted by boils struck at the heart of their purity system. But the gods of Egypt were unable to protect their people from diseases the Lord sent on them. Again the Lord showed His superiority.

## **7. Hail**

God still warned Pharaoh of the consequences of disobedience. He sent his plagues so that Pharaoh and his people would know that there is none like Him. He could already have put out his hand and struck Pharaoh and his people with pestilence and cut them off from the earth. But there was a reason why God raised Pharaoh up. It was to show Pharaoh His power and to proclaim His name in all the earth.

Another plague was imminent. Pharaoh was still exalting himself

against God's people and would not let them go. But God was merciful, warning the Egyptians 24 hours in advance of coming hail and of its severity. He even instructed Moses to advise people to bring their servants and livestock under shelter. Some feared the word of the Lord and made preparations, while others ignored His word.

In this and the ninth plague, two of the supposedly most powerful of the Egyptian gods were shown to be powerless. Isis and Osiris were supposed to control the weather. But at a stage when the weather in Egypt was supposed to be fine day after day, God acted against them.

### **8. Locusts**

The Egyptians relied on Serapis to protect them from locusts. But he, too, could not defeat the God of the Israelites. We notice that even some of Pharaoh's servants were beginning to realise the power of God – and the destruction resulting from disobeying him. They pleaded with Pharaoh to do something!

### **9. Darkness**

A second plague was directed against Isis and Osiris. Darkness fell on the land of Egypt for three days. But where the Israelites lived there was light. Egypt's most important gods could not control day and night. The utter powerlessness of the gods of Egypt was now apparent. God had shown Himself to be superior to the gods of Egypt.

However, Pharaoh still refused to bow before God. He even told Moses that if he appeared before him again, he would be put to death. Before he left Pharaoh on that occasion, Moses informed Pharaoh that severe judgment would fall.

### **10. Judgment against Pharaoh**

God had given Pharaoh every opportunity to bow before Him but he had consistently resisted God. The time had come for the tenth and final plague when God would act in judgment on Pharaoh; he would experience the wrath of God, realise that Yahweh was superior to the gods he put his faith in, and finally he would set the Israelites free.



## To us today

We must remain convinced of the power of our God. Even though so many around us question His power and His authority we remain convinced that He is omnipotent and omniscient. That which He has promised to do He will perform and we can have absolute confidence He will do what He has promised to do.

Don Stormer

## ***My Training Checklist***

### ***Read Hebrews 12:1, Philippians 3:13-14***

**A** world champion marathon runner had a simple rule: “Never, never, never, give up”. But his steely determination to finish the race also meant that he spent many long hours in training.

Do we dare to imagine that we can overcome every obstacle and finish our spiritual race well without personal discipline and training? Surely not!

Are you a Christian? Have you been saved by the blood of the Lord Jesus? Well then, take a moment to look down this “Training Checklist”. How does your life measure up?

- I have purposed in my heart to follow the Lord Jesus Christ for the rest of my days.

Training begins in the heart. We may have many weaknesses and fears, but if we want to glorify God in our lives, the Lord can certainly take us and use us (Proverbs 4:23).

- I have counted the cost and I am willing (God helping me) to pay it.

The Lord Jesus told us to count the cost (Luke 14:25-33). We are on the narrow and difficult way that leads to life, not the broad road to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14).

- I am taking every opportunity to learn from the Scripture and from others.

The Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9) and we need His mind and wisdom. We must set about educating ourselves in the heavenly way.

- I am learning to allow God to search my heart and to guide my ways.

The seed of the Word must take deep root in our hearts (Matthew 13:20-21). Without repentance and humility, we will certainly go astray.

- I am seeking to always live with a clear conscience before God and man.

This was one of Paul's rules for life (Acts 24:16). If we excuse a defiled conscience, we cannot succeed.

- I am learning, and practising, self-discipline.

Self-discipline, or self-control, means that I choose how to spend my time and energy in a godly manner, rather than being controlled by feelings, moods or laziness.

- I am developing a habit of personal prayer and intercession for others.

The teaching and the life of the Lord Jesus demonstrate the vital importance of prayer.

- I am learning to be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

If we can control our tongues we are doing well (James 1:19-20, 3:2). So much sin and hurt comes through an undisciplined tongue!

- I am learning to judge my whole life (at home and outside) by God's Word.

What we are at home is what we truly are. If we learn to live in the Spirit at home, victory in the other areas of our life will be relatively easy.

- I am taking any available opportunity to help, serve and encourage others in this new life.

Neil Buckman

## ***True Christmas: Sacrifice and Celebration***

**A**t a birthday party we celebrate a person's life. But what if that person isn't mentioned at the birthday party? That would be embarrassing! Christmas can be like that, because Christmas is when our culture chooses to remember the birth of Jesus Christ, but not everyone does this.

We usually celebrate Christmas with family and friends. But I was reminded recently that Christmas is not only a time of celebration. It also involves a lot of sacrifice; because it took sacrifices to get Christ here into this world. A sacrifice is something that's given up willingly for the sake of a better cause. This article is a summary of a presentation on this topic by Dr. Xavier Lakshmann.

Christmas is not just holidays, or food, or drinks, or decorations, or Santa Claus or gifts, or greetings. That's the celebrative part of Christmas, which is an outcome of the real Christmas. But celebrating without recognising the birthday person (Jesus Christ) is embarrassing and tragic.

### **The first Christmas**

There was a great celebration that first Christmas. When the shepherds were told the good news about the baby Jesus, the angels praised God. "Glory to God in the highest heaven" (Luke 2:14-18 NIV). And the shepherds were very excited when they saw the baby Jesus.

But what about Mary's family? Because of their shame, they probably weren't celebrating. Her pregnancy would have been known in their local community. No one would have believed that she was carrying a holy baby. Like everyone else, her family would have thought she was carrying an illegitimate child, which brought shame and disgrace on the family and into the community. Even her fiancé (Joseph) planned to divorce her quietly (Matthew 1:18-25). But he changed his mind when an angel told him that Jesus was indeed a holy baby.

Did God celebrate at the first Christmas? Probably not. That was when God gave His Son Him to the world as a human being to stand forever with people who were sinners. So behind the scenes there is a sacrificial aspect to the first Christmas.

### **Christmas was God's idea**

Jesus taught Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). There are four things in this verse: God's love, God giving, an invitation to believe, and an invitation to live. The first two and the last two are linked together. God so loved that He gave. For God, to love means to give. And He gave the best He could give. That is Himself. And then He says "whoever believes". Nicodemus is urged to believe that Jesus is the Son of God in order to have eternal life instead of perishing. Giving is always sacrificial, while receiving (in this case, believing to receive eternal life) is a reason to celebrate.

At Christmas we remember that God gave Himself, which is a sacrifice. Sending Jesus to earth was God's idea. In this sense, God invented Christmas. And when we receive God's gift (of forgiveness, love, joy, peace, and eternal life through Jesus), that's a reason for celebration. Let's look at four things that God sacrificed on the first Christmas so that we can celebrate.

### **The sacrifice of God's glory**

On the night before He was executed, Jesus prayed to God the Father, "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began" (John 17:5). Before Christ came into the world, He lived in heaven with God the Father. He had the glory and splendour of deity. But on the first Christmas Jesus veiled His glory. Instead of being visible, it was hidden (or veiled). In John 17 Jesus is praying that His visible glory might be restored in heaven.

Paul explains why Jesus sacrificed His glory, "What if He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory – even us, whom He also

called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:23-24). God is preparing some people for glory. Jesus had to sacrifice His glory at the first Christmas so that we can regain our glory (which was lost by Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden) by trusting in Jesus Christ.

On the first Christmas, God not only sacrificed His glory; He also sacrificed His riches.

### **The sacrifice of God's riches**

Paul said that Jesus was the greatest example of generosity: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus was enormously rich because He was God. But at the first Christmas, He became poor. So He went from wealth to poverty. Jesus gave up everything so poor sinners like us who were under God's judgment can become rich in Him. We are rich "in Christ". This has been expressed in verse as:

Let the weak say "I am strong"

Let the poor say "I am rich"

Let the blind say "I can see"

Because of what the Lord has done in me.

We can't understand Christmas without reference to the crucifixion and the resurrection, because the incarnation (Christ's birth) became a saving event through the crucifixion.

On the first Christmas, God not only sacrificed His glory and His riches; He also sacrificed His life.

### **The sacrifice of God's life**

Jesus said, "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15) and "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

When Jesus came as a baby the first Christmas, He came to sacrifice His life. So Christmas cost God's life. Why? So that we may have His life. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to

the full” (John 10:10). The “life” referred to here is spiritual life. This life is given by God upon trust in Jesus Christ (John 5:39-40; 1 John 5:11-12). Because we have spiritual life, we can celebrate at Christmas by celebrating Jesus who is the source of spiritual life. Christmas is a time to encounter this life in Christ Jesus. As we saw in John 3:16, He loved to give, and we believe to live (spiritually). But if we are spiritually dead, our Christmas is meaningless.

## Summary

True Christmas is not just a time of celebration. It involves much more than celebration. Christmas is a time to:

- Reflect on God’s sacrifice (what He has done for us)
- Recognise Jesus our Saviour
- Reconnect with Christ (God’s Christmas gift to us), and
- Rejoice.

Let’s celebrate Christmas meaningfully by remembering God’s sacrifices. Christmas is a sacrifice and celebration of God’s glory. Christmas is a sacrifice and celebration of God’s riches. Christmas is a sacrifice and celebration of God’s nature. Christmas is a sacrifice and celebration of God’s life. And let’s be willing to sacrifice for others just as God sacrificed for us.

George Hawke

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*“We must give up the vain idea of trying to please everybody. That is impossible, and the attempt is a mere waste of time. We must be content to walk in Christ’s steps, and let the world say what it likes.”*

*“Of all the doctrines of the Bible none is so offensive to human nature as the doctrine of God’s sovereignty.”*

*“A true Christian is one who has not only peace of conscience, but war within. He may be known by his warfare as well as by his peace.”*

J.C. Ryle



Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Isaac Watts

*From all of us at ACM Australia, ACM  
USA, ACM Armenia and Lebanon  
Wishing you all Merry Christmas and  
a blessed New Year 2023*



Our ACM team is packing gifts for 715 children to be distributed in 11 villages before Christmas Including 2023 calendars and Christian magazines.